



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

251 Causeway Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2119

Mitt Romney
GOVERNOR

Kerry Healey
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ellen Roy Herzfelder
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000

Fax: (617) 626-1181

or (617) 626-1180

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 4, 2003

CONTACT:

Katie Cahill

617-626-1126

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY ELLEN ROY HERZFELDER AWARDS

\$770,000 GRANT TO REBUILD GLOUCESTER SEAWALL

Reconstruction to ensure continued safe use for commercial and recreational watercraft.

Environmental Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder announced today that the Department of Environmental Management is providing a \$770,000 grant to Gloucester that will permit reconstruction of a deteriorated section of the Blynman Canal.

Secretary Roy Herzfelder said, "This grant will enhance the environment, the economy, and the enjoyment of Gloucester. It represents the kind of partnership between local and state government that is critical to the well-being of our Commonwealth."

Department of Environmental Management Commissioner Peter Webber added, "The Blynman Canal is a historic and vital component to Gloucester's economic and civic life. We're very pleased to be able to assist the community in keeping this key waterway open to all users."

Located between the canal's harbor-side entrance and the drawbridge, the degraded section of seawall is approximately 150 feet in length and has forced the closing of a portion of walkway along the canal. The section's instability and partial collapse are the result of years of boat wake impacts, tides, and freeze and thaw action during winter months.

Anticipating a possible collapse that could restrict or suspend the canal's navigation by commercial and recreational watercraft, the Seaport Advisory Council approved emergency funding to rebuild the wall on November 15, 2002. The Seaport Advisory Council is a coordinating body comprised of port-city mayors, port professionals and state agency officials. The Council oversees the allocation of funds from the Seaport Bond Bill passed in 1996.

Work was begun on the project on January 20, 2003 and is expected to be complete by the end of spring, 2003. The Seaport Bond Bill requires the state to pay an 80% share of the total project cost with the balance coming from city funds.

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